

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING ROBERT D. PUETT

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Robert D. Puett and recognize his contributions to homeless families and adults in Marin County, CA. Mr. Puett is retiring after 23 years of service with Homeward Bound of Marin.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Bob earned a degree in sociology at San Francisco State University in 1972 and trained as a disaster shelter manager for the American Red Cross in 1983.

In 1987, Bob began working as a counselor in Marin's winter emergency shelter program and joined Homeward Bound as a program director the following year. He managed shelters for the Red Cross following the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 and the Oakland Hills wildfire in 1991.

Always an advocate for those in need, Bob stayed involved when neighbors of the winter shelter protested its location at the Marin County Armory. With authorization from then-Marin County Supervisor Bob Roumiguere, he managed an encampment at the Marin County Civic Center from April to October 1992 to demonstrate the need for a year-round shelter.

The program moved several times in the next two years, landing at the former Hamilton Air Force Base in Novato in 1994. Bob recalls managing the shelter in a large surplus Army tent on a site that flooded regularly and, at least once, lost its roof. Eventually the shelter moved to the warehouse on the site of today's Homeward Bound headquarters.

Taking advantage of legislation that authorized homeless services on decommissioned military bases, Bob helped lead a public education campaign to persuade neighbors of the Hamilton base to create a year-round shelter. I am proud to have worked with Bob, the City of Novato and the Navy, which led to the opening of the 80-bed New Beginnings Center in 2000 with full community support. It was the first such shelter built in the country on a decommissioned military site.

Bob became deputy director at Homeward Bound in June 2000, continuing to build on his desire to offer homeless people not only "a hot and a cot"—a meal and a bed—but an avenue out of homelessness. He oversaw development of the Next Key Center, also at Hamilton, which opened in November 2008 with 32 studio apartments, new offices for Homeward Bound, an expanded kitchen for job training and an event space for public rental.

The Marin County Human Rights Commission honored Bob's commitment and contributions to improving opportunities for people in need with its Martin Luther King, Jr., Award in 2006.

At his retirement party, Bob accepted a "Hair Raising Challenge" and allowed his

trademark ponytail to be cut in exchange for a \$30,000 contribution to support shelter and job training programs at Homeward Bound.

In retirement, Mr. Puett plans to join Homeward Bound's board of directors.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we thank Mr. Robert Puett for his many years of service on behalf of the people of Marin County. He has worked tirelessly to demonstrate his unwavering belief that people can overcome great obstacles to change their lives for the better. For this, he deserves our appreciation.

HONORING EVAN BLASINGAME OF
NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Evan Blasingame, who is being honored as the Napa County 2011 Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Blasingame has taught United States History and International Baccalaureate History of the Americas at St. Helena High School since 2007. Before his move to the Napa Valley he taught in Mendocino County, where he was named Laytonville High School Teacher of the Year.

To Evan, teaching and learning do not stop at the classroom door. Throughout his teaching career, Evan has volunteered to serve as Academic Decathlon Coach, National Honor Society advisor, Interact Club advisor and English Club advisor. He has also supported his peers by serving as St. Helena Teachers Association Site Representative, WASC Team Leader, Teacher Representative to the District Advisory Council and Cofounder of the Vets Back to School Program.

Mr. Blasingame is known as one of the hardest working teachers in Napa County. His door is always open to his students to ensure they reach their fullest potential. He is an engaging speaker who is incredibly passionate about his subject matter and his passion is passed onto his students. He makes history fun and accessible.

A great teacher can have an impact on a young person that lasts forever. All of us can remember a teacher who has had a profound influence on our lives. Mr. Blasingame has had this impact on hundreds of students and is a sterling example of the best his profession has to offer.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Evan Blasingame for the leadership, guidance and inspiration he has provided to hundreds of young people throughout his career. I join his wife, Hiromi, his son Kai and the entire community in thanking him for his service and wishing him continued success and fulfillment.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT NEFF OF
GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Robert Paul Neff of Grapevine, Texas. Robert passed away September 10, 2010 and leaves behind a strong legacy of public service.

Robert served as manager of the Criminal Justice Programs, CJP, at the North Central Texas Council of Governments, NCTCOG, starting in 1999. The CJP facilitates community-planning groups, provides technical assistance to develop successful grant programs and assists local units of government in solutions to common challenges within a 16-county region. Since 2001, he served the Texas Association of Regional Councils Criminal Justice Planners Association as its secretary, chair, and communications liaison to local, regional, State, and Federal agencies. He was also a member of the Advisory Council and Board of Directors of the National Criminal Justice Association and the American Society for Industrial Security, serving as its president of the West Michigan Chapter in 1984.

Prior to coming to North Texas, Robert was a law enforcement officer in Kalamazoo, Michigan for almost 22 years, retiring as a detective assigned to auto theft, street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and militia groups. He received a master of Social Work degree in Correctional Administration from Western Michigan University, where he also was an adjunct professor in the Criminal Justice Program in the Department of Sociology.

Robert has been described as "street savvy" and applied this knowledge to the criminal justice grant program, helping secure millions of dollars for funding for programs used by local governments and nonprofit organizations. He had the respect of his peers throughout Texas, and was sought by many for his advice.

A believer in service to local governments and the criminal justice community, Robert brought critical thinking, innovation and grant funding experience to enhance the level of public safety expertise and protection to North Texans. Robert also invested in his community through the First United Methodist Church of Grapevine, Texas. He was respected by all who met him, and will be greatly missed. Robert was also active in pulmonary fibrosis organization and outreach.

Madam Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise today to remember Robert Neff. It is my privilege to have this opportunity to honor his life and legacy.

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